



# Ten tips for reducing your household's natural gas bills this winter

## 1. Add Insulation

Insulation is designed to resist heat flow - that is, if it is cold outside, insulation helps keep the heat inside the house. In the winter, a lack of insulation makes walls very cold and the furnace must work harder to keep the house warm. To get the biggest savings, the easiest place to add insulation is in the attic, however, it is important to determine how much and what kind of insulation you already have. Consultants and qualified contractors that partner with the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Program are trained to help you identify your insulation needs.

## 2. Seal the Air Leaks

Air sealing is simply closing holes, cracks and gaps where air can pass into or out of your home. On cold days you run a furnace to maintain a comfortable temperature. A home that has air leaks costs more to heat because your system must work longer to maintain that temperature. Hidden air leaks often add up to the equivalent of an open window. Sealing air leaks will maintain a comfortable temperature throughout your home year round and help to lower your heating bill.

## 3. Maintain Heating System

Make sure your heating system is operating the way it was designed.

## 4. Replace Furnace Filter

Replace the filter in your furnace monthly, and make sure the supply and return registers aren't obstructed.

## 5. Replace Heating System

Installing a new heating system in your home is the perfect time for you to talk to a consultant or qualified contractor partnering with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. By working with them to assess the heating needs of your home, and by utilizing the Efficient Heating & Cooling Initiative, you will get high efficiency equipment that will allow you to increase the comfort of your home and help lower your heating bill.

## 6. Use Programmable Thermostats

ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostats help save money and keep your home comfortable by automatically adjusting your temperature setting while you are asleep or away, saving you as much as \$100 per year.

## 7. Turn Down the Water Heater

Set your water heater temperature to 120° F. This will be hot enough to meet your household needs without danger of scalding. According to The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), each 10°F reduction in water temperature will generally save three percent to five percent on your water heating costs.

## 8. Conserve Hot Water

Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators can reduce your household's hot water consumption. A family of four, each showering five minutes a day, can use about 500 gallons per week – a two-year drinking water supply for one person! Water-conserving showerheads and faucet aerators can cut hot water use in half. ACEEE states that a family of four can save 12,000 gallons of water a year and the energy required to heat it.

## 9. Choose an ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washer

ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers save up to 25 gallons of water per load compared to conventional machines. If you have a gas water heater and wash ten loads of laundry a week, you will save more than \$900 over the 15-year life of the washing machine. Savings are even greater with electric water heaters.

## 10. Use Ceiling Fans

ENERGY STAR qualified ceiling fans move air up to 20 percent more efficiently than standard ceiling fans, saving you up to \$25 a year on energy bills. In addition, ceiling fans have the added benefit of lowering your heating bill. Adjusting the motor so the fan runs at a low speed in a clockwise direction will produce a gentle updraft which forces warm air near the ceiling down to occupied space. By adjusting your thermostat when using a ceiling fan, additional energy savings can be realized.

## LEARN MORE

[energyhelp.wi.gov](http://energyhelp.wi.gov)

For more information on natural gas savings, call the Energy Help Hotline at 800.522.3014.

[focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com)

Contact Focus to learn more about the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, Efficient Heating and Cooling Initiative and ENERGY STAR Products Program.

[homeenergyplus.wi.gov](http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov)

For more information on heating for income qualified assistance residents contact the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program at 866.432.8947.

[energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

The ENERGY STAR program provides information on energy efficient products that meet ENERGY STAR standards.

[aceee.org](http://aceee.org)

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) is an additional resource on energy efficient products and information.

For more information  
call 800.522.3014 or  
visit [energyhelp.wi.gov](http://energyhelp.wi.gov)

Governor Jim Doyle established the Energy Help Hotline to help Wisconsin residents manage their energy usage at a time of rising natural gas prices.

